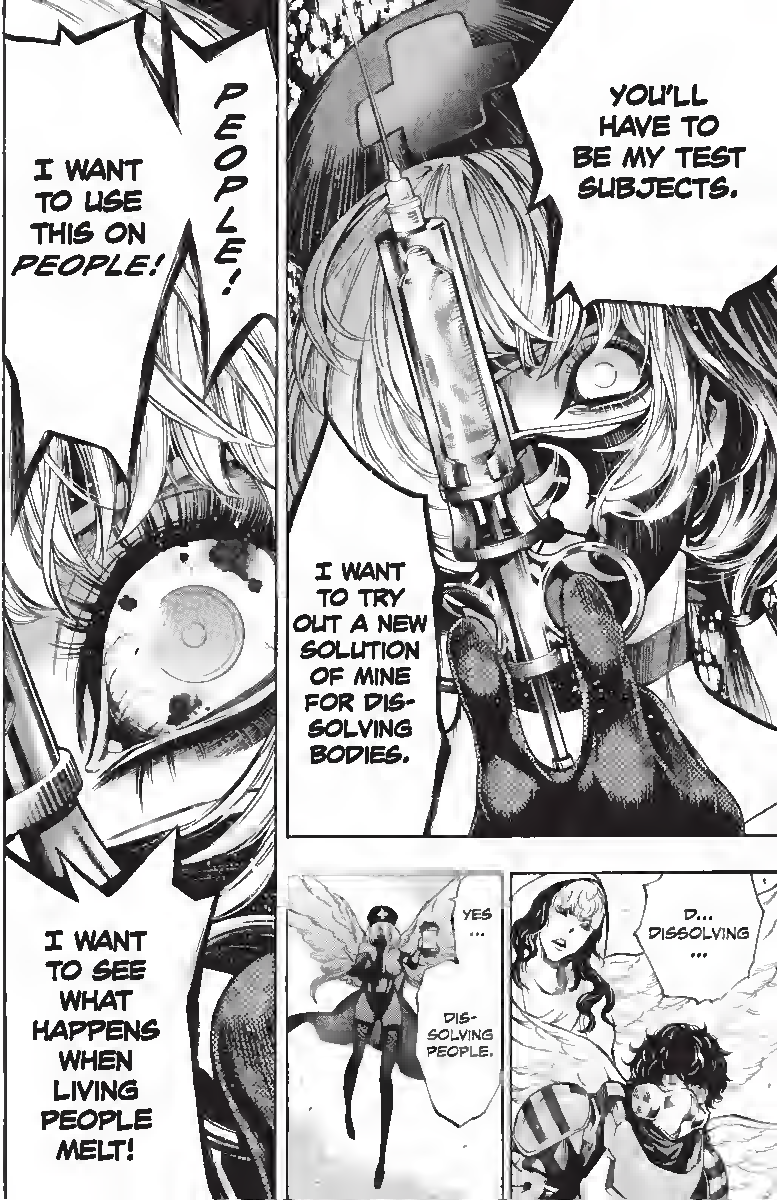
PLATINVM END

CHAPTER 19

The Glass Vessel

STORY BY TSUGUMI OHBA ART BY TAKESHI OBATA

OH, DEAR, DEAR, DEAR... YOU LOOK LIKE YOU WANT ME TO STOP.
SHH...
HEE HEE, ALL RIGHT.
I MIGHT CONSIDER IT... IF YOU ACCEPT MY CONDITION.
SLIP.
?!
THIS IS CRAZY ...
THEY'RE INSANE ...
CLIK
THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO SPREAD THIS
WHEN YOU PRESS THIS SWITCH...
...AND WHEN I DIE...
GRRGGG
IT'S ON NOW, OF COURSE.
THERE'S AN ACTIVATION CHIP INSERTED IN MY HEART...
...AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TURN IT ON OR OFF.

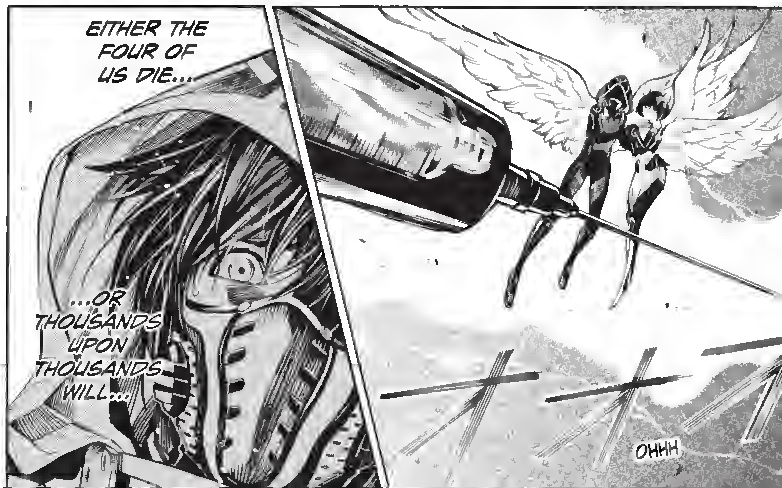

YOU'LL HAVE TO BE MY TEST SUBJECTS.
I WANT TO TRY OUT A NEW SOLUTION OF MINE FOR DIS-SOLVING BODIES.
D... DISSOLVING ...
YES ...
DIS-SOLVING PEOPLE.
I WANT TO USE THIS ON PEOPLE!
PEOPLE!
I WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LIVING PEOPLE MELT!

AAAAH!
I WANT TO TEST, I WANT TO TEST!
I WANT TO MELT, I WANT TO MELT!
VMM
VMM
VMM
JUST 0.01 CC WAS ENOUGH TO MELT A TEST RAT, BONES AND ALL!
THE ONLY THING LEFT IS TO TEST ON A HUMAN SUBJECT!
HEH ...
HEH HAH ...
AH!
AHH!
BMP
BMP
PSST
HEY, WATCH OUT!
AAH!
CALM YOURSELF, FUYUKO.
PST
PST
PST
HEE HEE HEE ...
AH!
AH!
...
THE FIRST TEST SUB-JECT ...

...
WILL
BE
YOU,
RED.
!
THIS IS
NOT A
BLUFF.
IF YOU
REFUSE
TO BE
HER TEST
SUBJECT,
WE WILL
SPREAD
FSV.

I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO KILL ANYONE BUT GOD CANDIDATES.
...
HE'S NOT LYING.
IF 10 FOUR DIE, NONE OF THE NON-CANDIDATES WILL!
IT'S THAT SICKENINGLY NAIVE SIDE OF YOU THAT REALLY DRIVES ME CRAZY. WE'RE IN A FIGHT TO THE DEATH-- YOU THINK I CARE ABOUT LYING?
MORON.

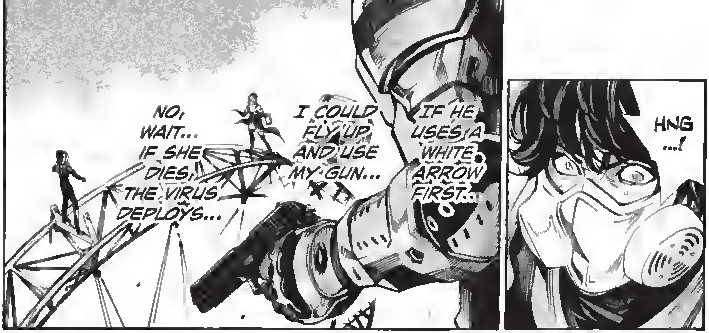
OKAY, RED.
STASH YOUR WINGS AND GET ON TOP OF THE FERRIS WHEEL.
DON'T WORRY, THIS NEEDLE'S STRONG ENOUGH TO GET THROUGH THAT SUIT.

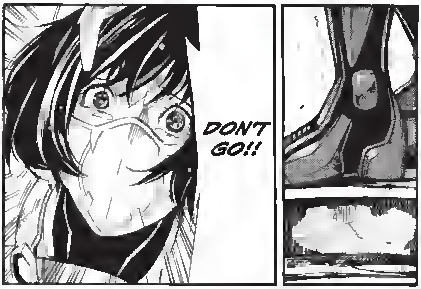

EITHER THE FOUR OF US DIE...
...OR THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS WILL...
OHHH

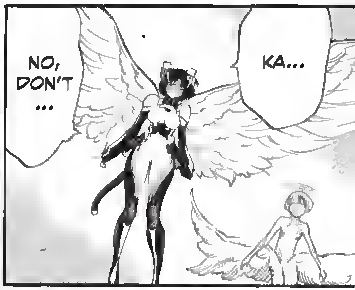
YOU COME LATER.
NO WAITING.
THE FIRST SUBJECT SHOULD BE...
WAIT!
WHEN ALL FOUR OF YOU ARE DEAD, I'LL GET ALL OF YOUR TOOLS.
IT WAS STUPID OF YOU TO USE YOUR REDS ON EACH OTHER WHERE I COULD SEE.
WHICH ONES DON'T WANT TO LIVE, WHICH ONES DON'T SEEM LIKELY TO RUN, AND WHOSE WINGS AND ARROWS GO TO WHOM WHEN THEY DIE-- CONSIDERING THESE THREE ISSUES, THE ORDER BECOMES OBVIOUS.
...
...?
AFTER... WE'RE DEAD... OUR TOOLS...?
KAKEHASHI...

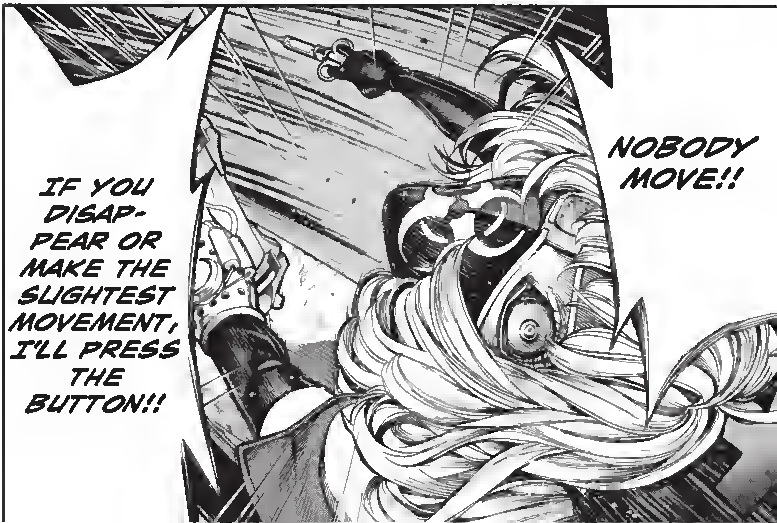
WHOOOOOO
TSP
SHH...
!
...
...
FIST
MIRAI...

IT'S FOUR-ON-THREE!


NO, WAIT... IF SHE DIES, THE VIRUS DEPLOYS...
I COULD FLY UP AND USE MY GUN...
IF HE USES A WHITE ARROW FIRST...
HNG ...!


DON'T GO!!


NO, DON'T ...
KA...


IF YOU DISAP-PEAR OR MAKE THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT, I'LL PRESS THE BUTTON!!
NOBODY MOVE!!

DROP YOUR KATANA, HAJIME.
DROP YOUR GUNS, STAGE IV.
HRM...
SHICK
CLANK
...
IT'S NO USE ...
I CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD PLAN ...
QUICKLY!

HEH...
WHOOO
ONE STEP EACH.
ALL RIGHT, RED.
WHOOO
KRK...
OOSH

SHH...
THE VIRUS WILL SPREAD...
PEOPLE WILL DIE...
WOB
WHOOO
OSH
KRIK
KRIK

WHAT CAN I DO...?
WHOOOO
PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T GO!!
DON'T GO...
NO! NO...
NOOOOO!!
SHUT HER UP!
THAT RED ARROW'S WORKING DOUBLE TIME.
IF YOU DIE, I...I...
P-PLEASE, MISS CAT-EARS.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MISS CAT-EARS?
GLARE
IT IS M-MADNESS... TO THROW AWAY YOUR LIFE FOR S-STRANGERS...
...EVEN IF IT IS TH-THOUSANDS OF THEM.
ONE'S LIFE SH-SHOULD ONLY BE RISKED FOR L-LOVED ONES!
NO. WE CAN'T ALLOW HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS TO DIE, EITHER...
TH... THEN WHAT SHOULD WE...?
SNORD
HUH?!
I DON'T KNOW.
I... I DON'T KNOW... BUT...
...I JUST DON'T WANT RED TO DIE!!

WHOOO
OOO
I REALLY DO...
THE ARROW DOESN'T MATTER!
BUT THIS IS THE RIGHT CHOICE... YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND IF YOU WEREN'T AFFECTED BY THE RED ARROW...
THANK YOU.
IT'S NOT GUARANTEED THAT SHE'S GOING TO KILL ME.
...
BUT SHE WOULDN'T BE ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE AND CRYING IF IT WASN'T FOR THE RED ARROW, RIGHT?

KAKE-
HASHI,
NO...!!
SHIT!
KEEP
THAT
BRAIN
WORKING...
THINK!
THINK!!

THAT'S NOT WHAT I SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT NOW.
I'VE GOT TO STICK UP FOR ALL LIFE, TO FIND A WAY FOR NO ONE TO DIE...
I CAN'T GIVE UP. NOT UNTIL THE VERY END...
SHOULD MY OWN LIFE BE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME?
PEOPLE CAN'T BE HAPPY IF THEY'RE DEAD...
THAT THING THAT HAJIME SAID...
I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER...
NO... IF I CAN SAVE MANY LIVES BY GIVING UP MY OWN...
BUT...

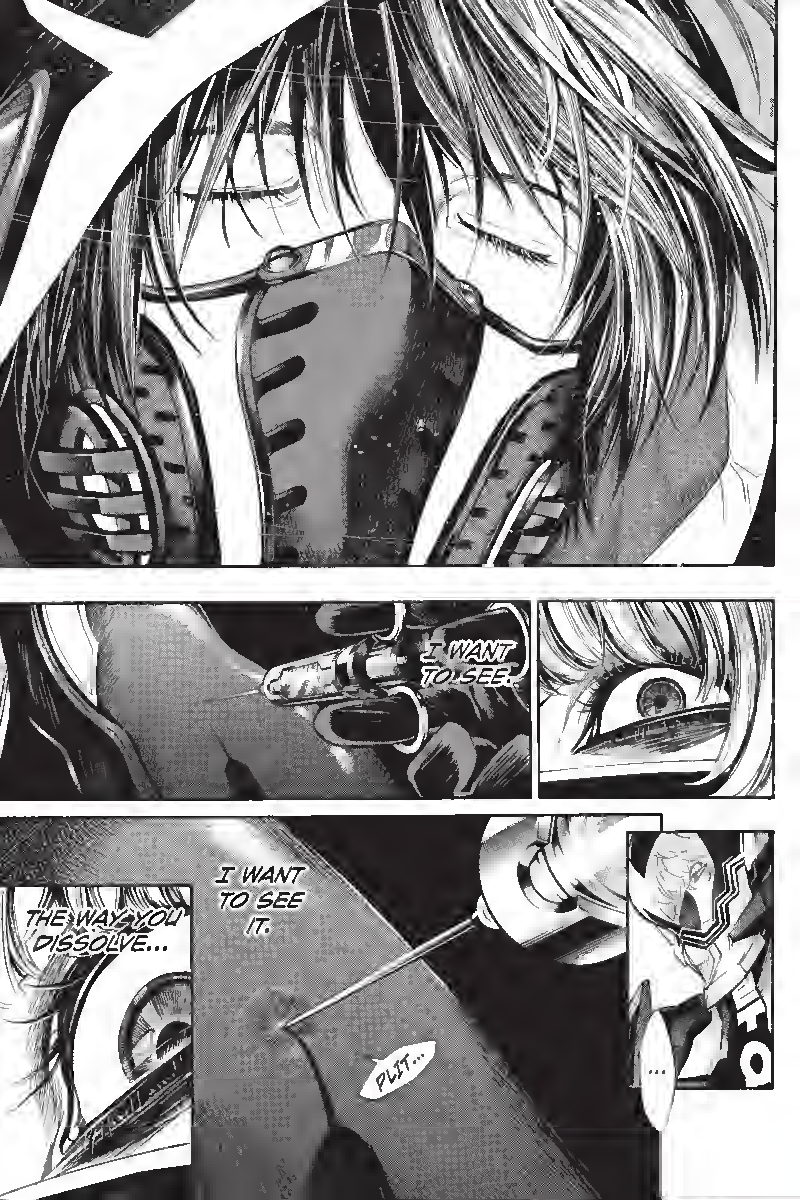
WHOOO
TWO MORE METERS.
THAT'S IT. GOOD BOY.
HOW CAN WE PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM DEPLOYING?
IF SHE DIES, IT AUTOMATICALLY EJECTS. WE CAN'T KILL HER. SO HOW DO WE PREVENT HER FROM PRESSING THE SWITCH?
CONVINCE HER TO SEE THE ERROR OF HER WAYS?
THAT'S A PIPE DREAM. AND POLIMAN'S GOT RED ARROWS.
ONE MORE METER.
THIS IS BAD! HE'S GOING TO DIE!
AND THEN WE GO IN ORDER AFTER HIM...
I MUST ESCAPE... WITH CAT EARS...
OOO
FORGET BEING A CANDIDATE... ALL I NEED IS TO BE WITH HER...

I KNOW HOW TO COUNT, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I WAS THE ONE WHO TAUGHT MY SISTER HER NUMBERS IN THE BATHTUB.
FWAP
FWAP
HUFF!
HOW LONG AGO WAS THAT ...?
WHOO
ANYWAY, I GUESS I CAN SEE THAT LOSING ONE ISN'T GOING TO FORCE YOU TO RETREAT ...
HUFF!
OOSH
WE'RE ONLY GETTING STARTED.
JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T KICK THE BUCKET BEFORE I HAVE THE CHANCE TO KILL YOU MYSELF, STAGE IV.

WHOOO
IF WE CAN KILL METRO-POLIMAN...
...THE WOMAN'S ARROW LOSES POWER.
DAMN... DAMN! WHAT CAN WE...
AND I'M SURE TESTING IT ON PEOPLE WAS HER HEARTFELT DESIRE TO BEGIN WITH...
NO, WAIT... HIS SUIT WILL REFLECT SWORDS AND BULLETS...
DON'T GET SCARED AND FLY OFF TO SAFETY.

DEATH
...
STOP.

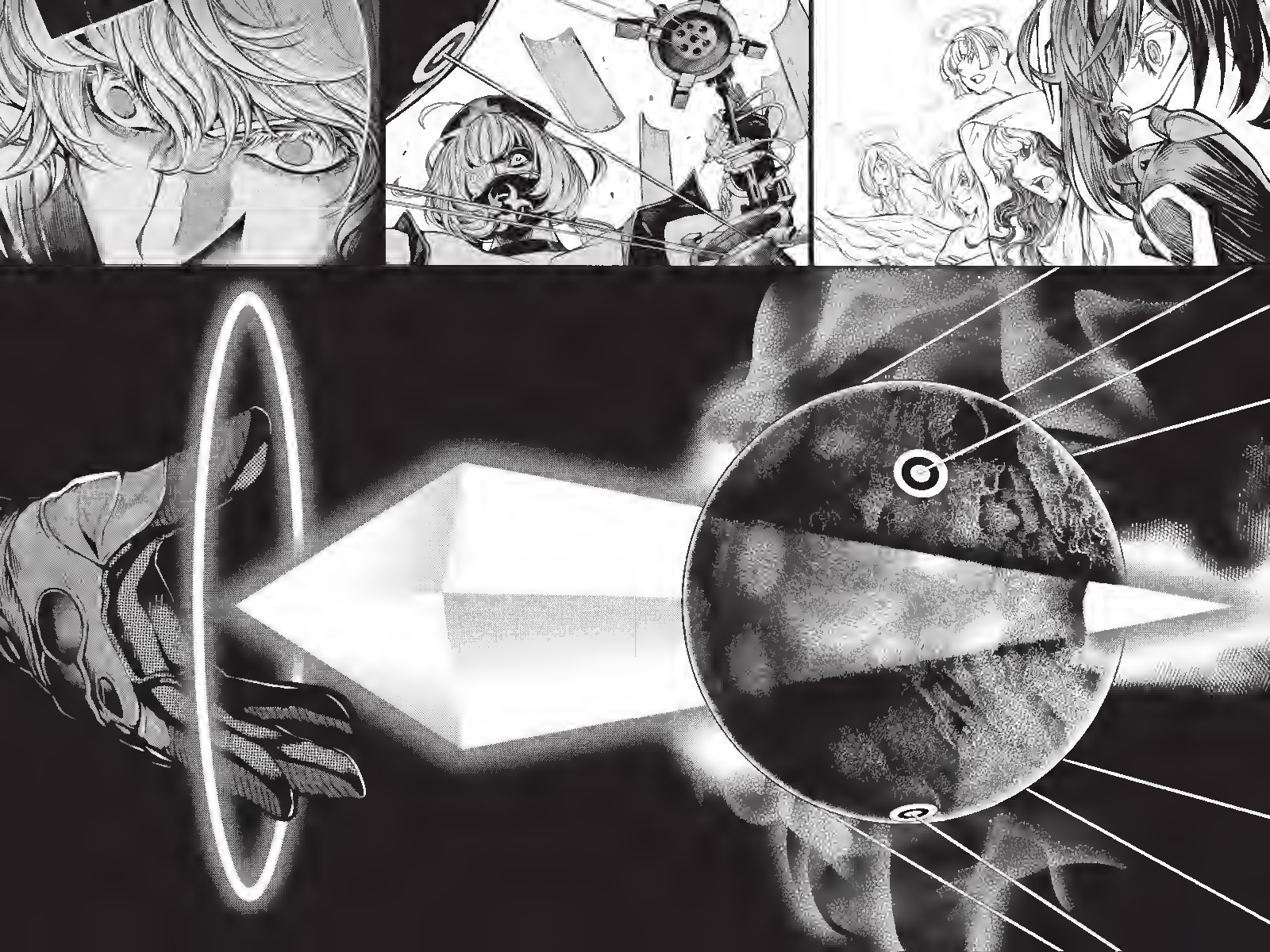
WHOOOO
OH NO. THIS IS BAD.
THINK, THINK! THIS COULD BE THE DEATH OF AYA AND NANAKA.
WHAT DO I DO?!


I WANT TO SEE.
...
I WANT TO SEE IT.
PLIT...
THE WAY YOU DISSOLVE...

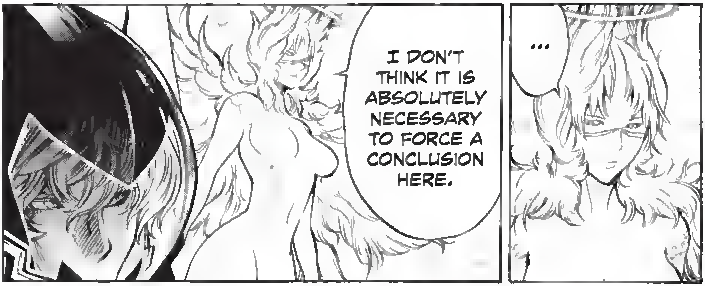
!
WHA...

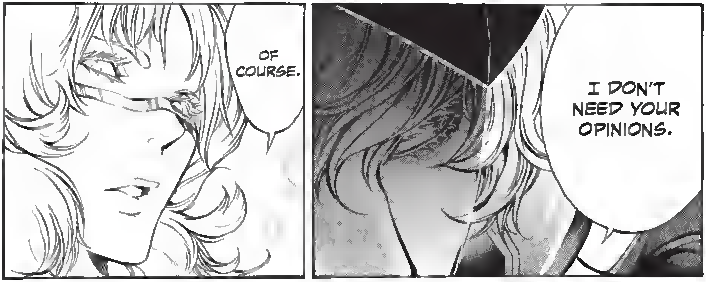
W!NGS!!

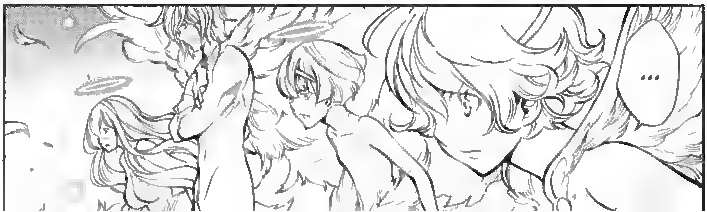
HIT IT!!
OH NO... WE'VE GOT TO... RUN...
IF HE TRIES...
...I PRESS IT.
...TO RESIST...
!



DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT GOING TO DIE BEFORE I'VE WITNESSED YOU PERISH...
...


I DON'T THINK IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO FORCE A CONCLUSION HERE.
...


OF COURSE.
I DON'T NEED YOUR OPINIONS.


...

FSHHHH
HE USED A WHITE ARROW... ON THE VIRUS...
IT'S CHANGING COLOR...
IT'S DEAD.
THAT'S RIGHT. THE VIRUS IS DEAD.
AND THE ARROW PASSES THROUGH WITHOUT BREAKING THE GLASS, SO NONE OF THE VIRUS ESCAPED.
KAKEHASHI...
YOU DID IT...
IF IT WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH CELLS TAKEN FROM HUMAN BEINGS, IT CAN MOST CERTAINLY PERISH.
HOW DID HE THINK OF...?
KRIK..
KRAK...

BOTH AT THE TOWER AND AT THE MIRROR HOUSE...
NO, YOUR FIXATION ON NOT KILLING ANYONE WORKED...
YOUR FIXATION ON LIFE...
NOT SUITED FOR BATTLE? NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH...
THE VIRUS IS DEAD!
FINISH IT!
KRAKK
KAKEHASHI...

PLIP
PLIP
PLOP

TO BE CONTINUED...

PLATINVM END

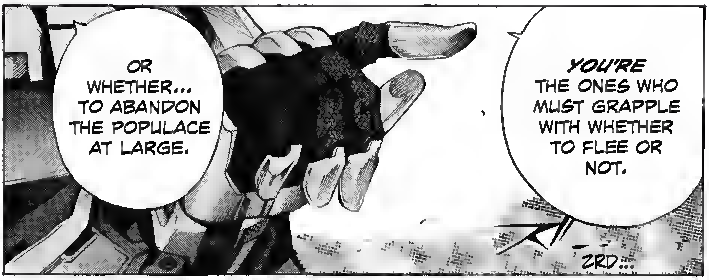
STORY BY **TSUGUMI OHBA**
ART BY **TAKESHI OBATA**

TAKESHI OBATA

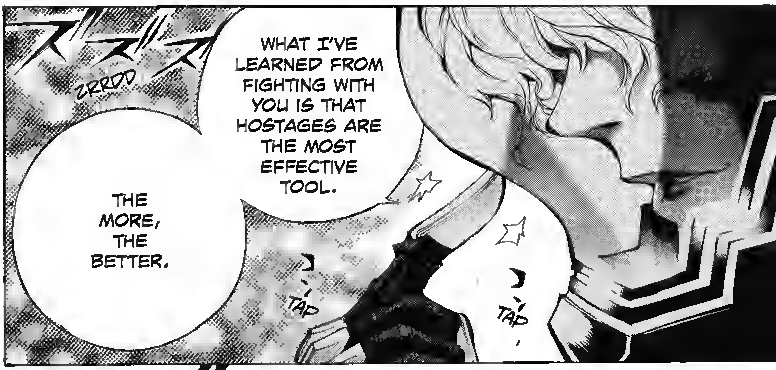
I'm thinking I'm going to have to go to the dentist for the first time since early elementary school.

TRANSLATION **STEPHEN PAUL** LETTERING **JAMES GAUBATZ**
DESIGN **SHAWN CARRICO** EDITOR **ALEXIS KIRSCH**

PLATINUM END © Tsugumi Ohba, Takeshi Obata/SHUEISHA

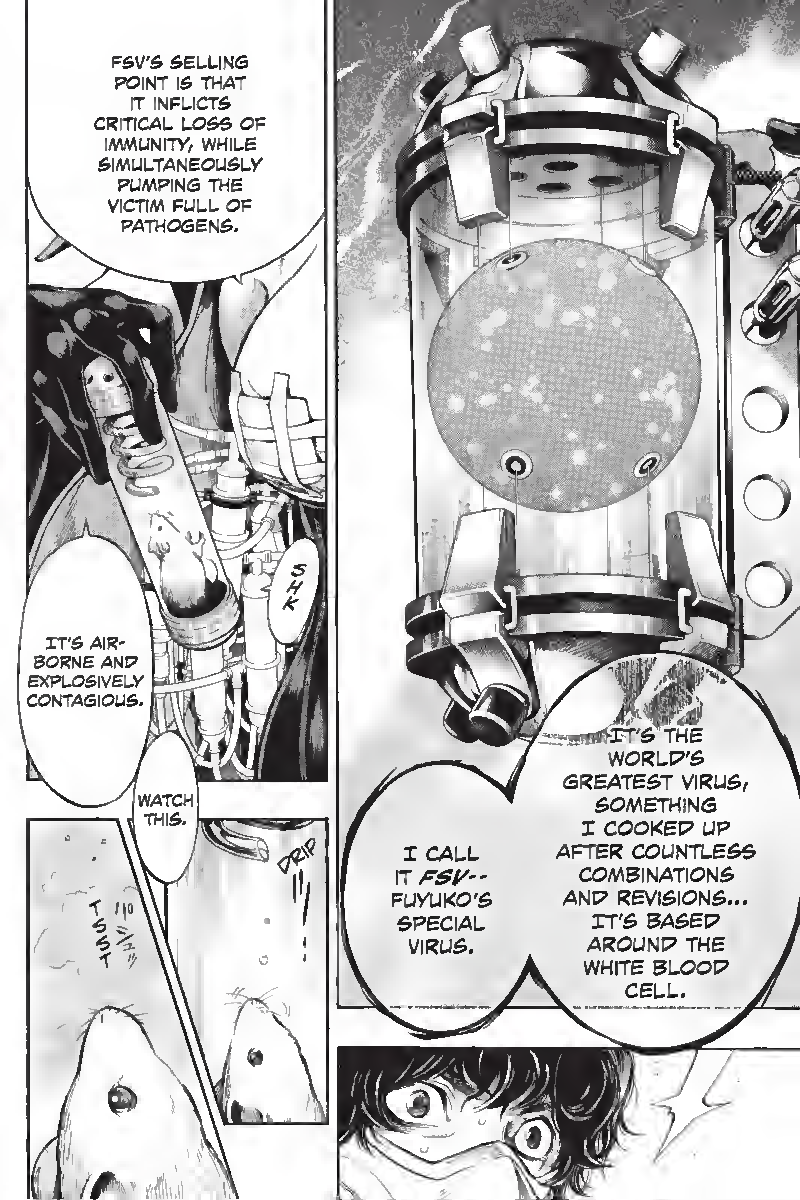

YOU'RE THE ONES WHO MUST GRAPPLE WITH WHETHER TO FLEE OR NOT.
ZRD...
OR WHETHER... TO ABANDON THE POPULACE AT LARGE.

?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

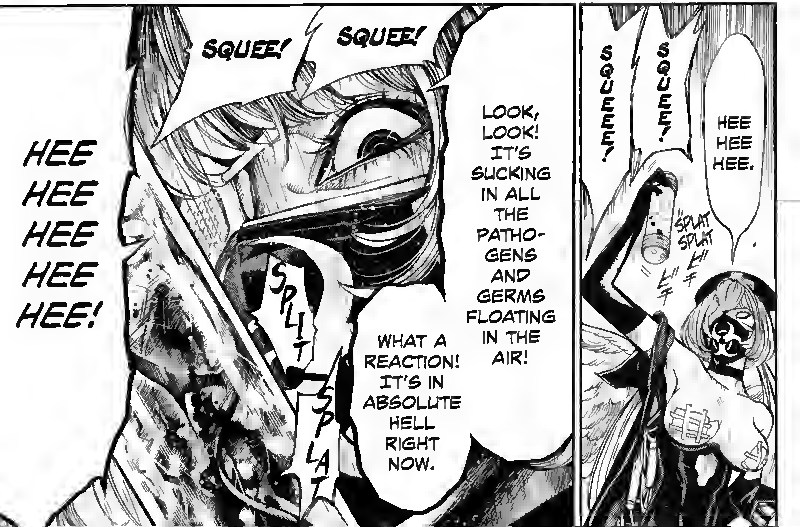

ZRRD
WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM FIGHTING WITH YOU IS THAT HOSTAGES ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL.
THE MORE, THE BETTER.
TAP
TAP

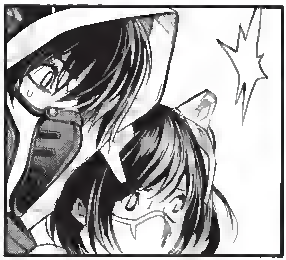
ZRRD...
SNAP
TIME FOR THE EXPERI-MENT.
FUYUKO KOHINATA.

POP
IT'S A CHEAPO COSTUME I GOT AT A THRIFT STORE, BUT IT WORKS WELL.
I WAS SHOWERING WHEN I GOT THE CALL...
SORRY ABOUT THE OUTFIT.
WHOOSH
!
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THIS IS?
CLINK

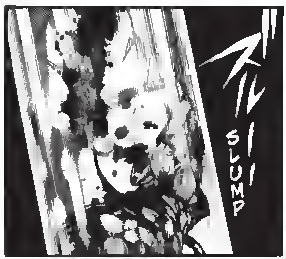

FSV'S SELLING POINT IS THAT IT INFLICTS CRITICAL LOSS OF IMMUNITY, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY PUMPING THE VICTIM FULL OF PATHOGENS.
SHK
IT'S AIR-BORNE AND EXPLOSIVELY CONTAGIOUS.
WATCH THIS.
DRIP
TSST
IT'S THE WORLD'S GREATEST VIRUS, SOMETHING I COOKED UP AFTER COUNTLESS COMBINATIONS AND REVISIONS... IT'S BASED AROUND THE WHITE BLOOD CELL.
I CALL IT *FSV*-- FUYUKO'S SPECIAL VIRUS.

SQUEEE!!
TWITCH
SQUEE!
TWITCH
TWITCH
SQUEEE!!
SQUIRT
SPLUT
BLUB
BLUB


HEE HEE HEE.
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
SPLAT SPLAT
LOOK, LOOK! IT'S SUCKING IN ALL THE PATHO-GENS AND GERMS FLOATING IN THE AIR!
WHAT A REACTION! IT'S IN ABSOLUTE HELL RIGHT NOW.
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE!
SPLIT
SPLAT



GLAKH


ズルッ
SLUMP

HEE HEE HEE ...
SMOOCH

IT'S DEAD ...
...

SMIRK...
GOOD BABY ...
THE DEAD-LIEST IN HISTORY ...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
AN EPIDEMIC OF FSV WOULD CAUSE THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS--*MILLIONS*. IT COULD SPREAD OVERSEAS AND CAUSE AN INTERNATIONAL DISASTER...
AN ACT OF UNPRECE-DENTED BIO-TERRORISM.
OH, IT'S PHENOM-ENAL... I'M GETTING HIGH JUST *IMAGINING* IT.
SPLISH